

Sūrah 92

Al-Layl (The Night)

(Makkan Period)

Title

The opening word, *al-layl* (the night), constitutes the *Sūrah*'s title.

Period of Revelation

The contents of this *Sūrah* are almost the same as that of *Sūrah al-Shams*. Indeed it appears to be a sequel to *al-Shams* and both these *Sūrahs* underscore the same truth, though in their own ways. Hence, both must have been revealed during the same period.

Subject Matter and Theme

The *Sūrah* describes two markedly different ways of life and the consequences of following each of these. The two main themes are taken up thus in the *Sūrah* – the first one in Verses 1-11 and the second one in Verses 12-21.

First, it states that various individual communities have been striving in their divergent ways, and their actions differ in moral

terms as widely as day and night differ from each other. In line with the stylistic features of other short Qur'ānic *Sūrāhs*, this one too brings into focus some moral traits and also points to their absence in a particular group of people. On reading this account, therefore, one readily recognizes the identity of these two groups. The description is couched in succinct, moving statements that instantly strike a chord in every heart and mind. To the first group belong those who give out their wealth for Allah's cause, affirm the truth of goodness and abstain from disobeying Allah. As to the members of the second group, they are misers, behave with aversion to Allah and deny the truth of goodness. For these two mind-sets there are naturally two different results. Allah will facilitate for the first group the way to bliss. They will find it easier to do good and shun evil. Allah will facilitate for the second group the way to evil. As a result, they will not be able to do good. Rather, they will constantly be mired in evil. This description is concluded with the following poignant observation: "Wealth shall be of no avail to him when he perishes," (Verse 11).

Three truths are affirmed in the later part of the *Sūrah*: (1) Allah has not left man to his own in this world. Rather, it is for Him to show man the right way. This is stated in general terms, without specifying the Qur'ān and the Prophet (peace be upon him) as the sources of guidance. (2) To Allah belong the Next Life and the present. He grants man all in both worlds. It is up to man to ask Him for what he wants. (3) The wicked ones who reject the truth presented by the Qur'ān and the Prophet (peace be upon him) will be burnt in Hellfire. On the contrary, the God-fearing who spend their wealth for winning Allah's pleasure will be granted so much that will please them.